

his sins. He was profoundly sorry. He was sorry, not just because his sins would send him to hell, but because he had rejected and offended his best Friend, his loving Savior. He had rejected the Crucified One. He had turned his back on the One who longed for the salvation of his soul. He rejected the One who longed for this with a great longing and who was profoundly hurt by his sins, as He is profoundly hurt by our sins. (Spirago, *Anecdotes and Examples for the Catechism*, pp. 349-50.)

The Savior who snatched that man from the jaws of hell desires that we offend Him no more. He understands human weakness and provides for it with His Sacraments. He also distinguishes between sins of weakness and sins of malice. What is the difference? A sin of weakness is a sin committed after a person has made a valiant effort not to sin. It is a sin committed after a person has made a firm resolution to avoid sin and the occasions of sin. It is like Peter's sin in a sense. Peter did not seek to sin. He sought to stay near Our Lord. He was somewhat presumptuous, that is true; he did not watch and pray as Our Lord told him to. But he had little malice, in the sense of wanting to commit sin. He did not set out to put himself in the occasion of sin. He was actually following Our Lord. But through great weakness, he denied Him three times.

Sins of malice, on the other hand, are much more painful to the Sacred Heart. Even venial sins committed with full deliberation and consent, and with no intention of repentance—these offend Our Lord very much. Our Lord once revealed this to St. Margaret Mary. He appeared to her one day, and He showed great disfavor toward someone who was committing venial sins with full malice. This sinner was doing it with complete knowledge and full consent of the will. It doesn't mean she was doing it with contempt for God, for then it would be a horrible mortal sin, but she had no intention of repenting or of trying to do better. She probably fooled herself by thinking that it was only a venial sin. One day Our Lord appeared to St. Margaret Mary. He showed great disfavor towards this person. Our Lord indicated His great displeasure. He made it plain that He was going to punish her venial sins of malice. St. Margaret Mary interceded. She threw herself at His feet, clasped His legs, and told Our Lord that she was not going to let Him go until He agreed to pardon

the poor sinner. Our Lord was so moved by the confidence of the saint that He relented. Sins of malice, then, even if venial, must not be taken lightly.

Sins of weakness, on the other hand, which are committed after a great struggle, quickly become the object of divine mercy. There is, however, a deceit of the devil that we must watch out for. Take, for example, a person who is struggling with some sin—perhaps the vice of impurity. He goes to confession and receives absolution. He intends to sin no more with God's help and to avoid the occasions of sin. But he is so entangled in the habit of sin that, in spite of a valiant effort, he falls. Having sinned once, he then, with little or no effort, continues to commit the same sin. He thinks that it doesn't really matter because he is already in the state of mortal sin. What a clever trick of the devil!

In truth, it is not the first mortal sin, which involves the loss of grace, which has the greatest malice. It is the second sin and the third sin and so on. The reason is that they are sins committed without resistance. They are committed with greater knowledge and consent of the will. "It doesn't matter," people say, "I am already in mortal sin." But it does matter to God the Father. It matters to the Suffering Savior. It matters to the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier. It matters to Our Lady. In the opposite sense, it matters to Satan. He knows that if he can keep people in the habit of sin, he will probably get them in the end. What a clever trick—to get people to think that after the first valiant battle, it doesn't matter if they give in to sin with full deliberation and consent of the will. When, on the contrary, a person knows the devices of Satan and that every mortal sin is an infinite offense against God; when he gets up from a fall with a resolution to go to confession as soon as possible and to fight again as valiantly as he had fought before his fall—such a person is not far from conquering serious sin in his life.

My dear friends, "...there is Someone waiting outside, none other than your best Friend. He is most desirous to come in and be reconciled to you. May I admit him?" He is "...your best Friend, the One Who your whole life has shown you so much kindness and bestowed so many benefits upon you, and Whom you nevertheless have repulsed and persecuted. He is infinitely merciful. He longs to be reconciled to you. Do not turn Him away."